

AN
ADDRESS
TO
THE FACULTY, AND THE PUBLIC,
ON THE
Expediency of establishing
A FUND,
FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE WIDOWS AND ORPHANS OF
MEDICAL MEN,
In the Counties of
DURHAM AND NORTHUMBERLAND, AND THE TOWN OF
NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE.

BY FREDERICK GLENTON, SURGEON.

"The final view of all rational politics, is to produce the greatest quantity of happiness in a given tract of country. The happiness of a people, is made up of the happiness of single persons; and the quantity of happiness can only be augmented by increasing the number of the percipients, or the pleasure of their perceptions."

PALEY.

THE PROFITS ARISING FROM THE SALE OF THIS PAMPHLET, WILL BE
APPLIED TO THE BENEFIT OF THE INTENDED FUND.

NEWCASTLE:
PRINTED BY HALL AND ELLIOT.

1791.

ADDRESS

SIR FREDERICK AND THE BOARD

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TO THE
MEDICAL GENTLEMEN
IN THE COUNTIES OF
DURHAM AND NORTHUMBERLAND,
AND THE TOWN OF
NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE:

THE FOLLOWING ADDRESS, DESIGNED TO EVINCE THE
UTILITY OF ESTABLISHING

A FUND FOR THE RELIEF OF THE WIDOWS
AND ORPHANS OF THEIR BRETHREN,

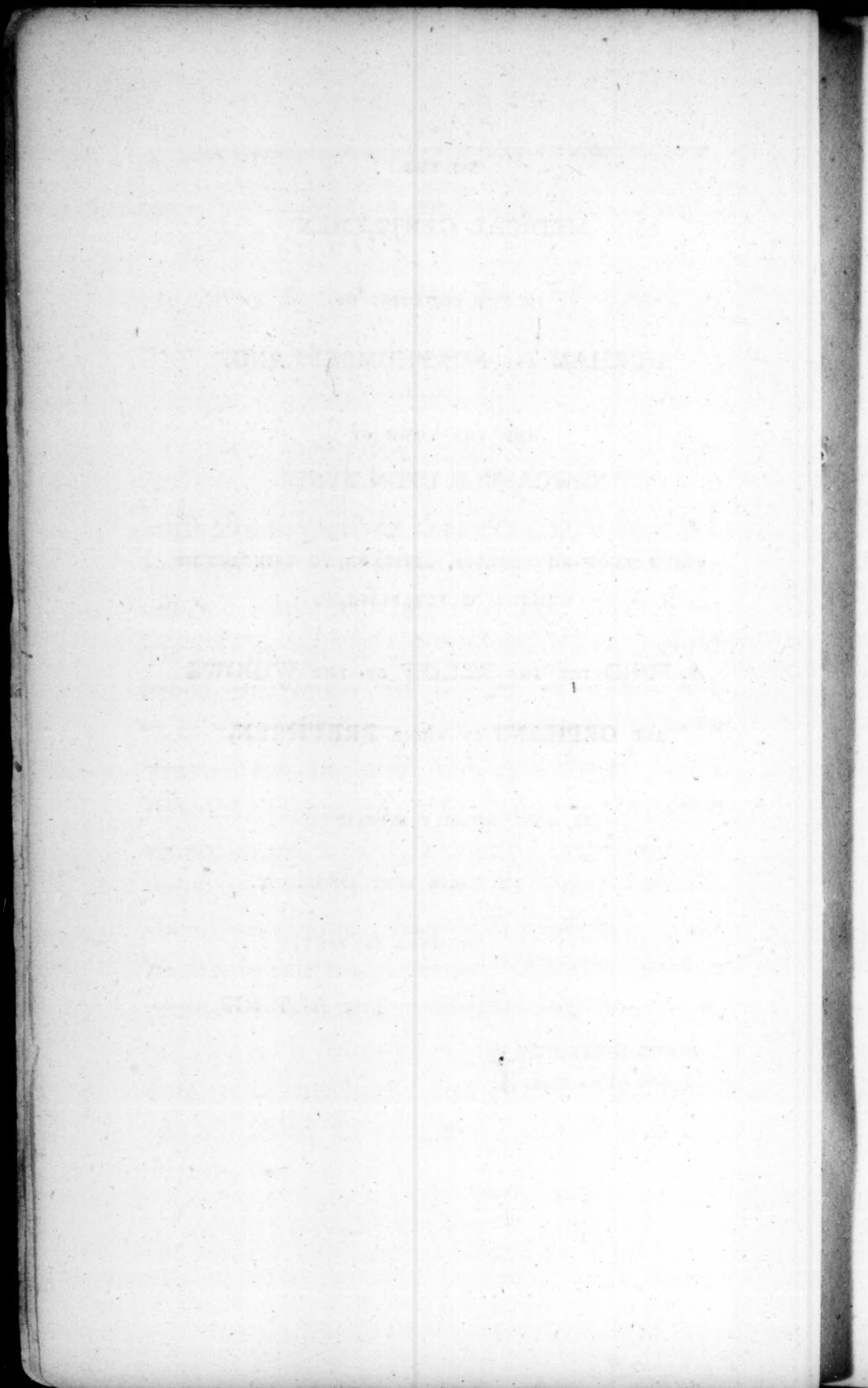
IS MOST HUMBLY INSCRIBED,

BY THEIR VERY SINCERELY

DEVOTED SERVANT,

THE AUTHOR.

WEST-AUCKLAND, }
September 13th, 1792. }



AN

A D D R E S S ,

&c.

IT is chiefly in respect to his relative situation, that the wants of a man are entitled to general attention and sympathy. Considered as an individual, his necessities are few, and the means of supplying them usually extensive and diversified. He is at liberty to change his situation with every turn of fortune, and accommodate himself to any line of conduct, the circumstances of the moment may render necessary. But, when his existence is, as it were, multiplied, and the concerns and happiness of *others* are inseparably attached to his own, his conduct and pursuits must then assume a more permanent and consistent form; and it becomes him, as a man of principle, to protect

protect *them*, with the most anxious solicitude, from every moral and natural evil, which it is in his power to avert.

But this is not all: His concern for their welfare and happiness, must bear reference to the occurrence of a period, which, in the common course of events, must arrive; when his children, perhaps too his wife, shall be left without the support of his example, his counsel, and his further pecuniary assistance. And I appeal with confidence, to the judgment of those, whose profession obliges them to be present at the dissolution of their friends, whether they have not repeatedly witnessed the pleasure, which even a *dying* man has felt, on mentioning the prosperous circumstances in which he leaves his dearest relatives; and, on the other hand, the agonies of mind, which the thoughts of their future distress, have brought on his last moments.

If, then, concerns of this nature are of such importance, as to afford satisfaction
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and joy, or sorrow and the most pungent remorse, at a season which is naturally employed in the most momentous contemplations ; let every man be cautious to stem the torrent of profligacy, or at least have the resolution to resist every prejudice or popular opinion, that may witness against him at the most solemn hour of his life.

The human mind, naturally prone to imitation, is insensibly biased in its pursuits of good or evil, by the influence of general or particular example. On this principle, whatever is the duty of man, as an individual, becomes a superior duty when considered as connected, more or less intimately, with a greater or less society. His views are promoted by coinciding with those of other men, and the good or evil capable of being effected by an aggregate body, will always be found to exceed what the individuals of that body, separately considered, would be capable of performing.

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On these, and other immutable truths, are founded the propensities of men to encourage the views of others, when similar with their own, by the establishment of societies. And on these principles, I presume to solicit the attention and concurrence of a body of men, respectable from their numbers, their learning, and general consequence in the world, in a measure calculated, it is humbly conceived, to promote the general interest of humanity and benevolence, and the particular good of the faculty and their dearest connexions.

A fund for the relief and benefit of the widows and orphans of medical men, is a measure of such obvious utility, that the idea being once suggested, it is hoped advocates will not be wanting for its expediency; but, in an address of this general nature, a few observations may not be improper, to enforce the necessity of the measure on those, not immediately interested in the event.

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And here, I sincerely lament, that this task has not fallen into more able hands. I am apprehensive lest inexperience, rather than want of zeal, should injure a cause I have very deeply at heart. But I will rely on the liberality of my brethren, and on the candour of the public, to do justice to the purity of the motive; and to consider less the abilities or situation of the writer, than the importance of the object to the faculty, and its general tendency to promote the happiness of mankind.

Under this idea, I should hope, that very little opposition would arise against the expediency of the measure on the part of the faculty; seeing it is calculated, in one sense, for their exclusive benefit. Indeed, I should not for a moment, have doubted their unanimous concurrence, had it not been for some objections, suggested by one gentleman, to whom, among many others, I have applied; which, though they by no means amounted to an absolute opposition, yet were sufficiently expressive to evince, that,

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in his opinion, I was too sanguine in my idea of the necessity of the institution. It is hoped, that nothing personal will be inferred from the mention of this circumstance, as the gentleman I allude to and myself, have by no means any disagreement, or even opposition of interests, but as his observations may possibly occur to others, I would wish, as far as possible, to anticipate and endeavour to refute any specious objections.

It was urged, that the widows and orphans of medical men were not often left in indigent circumstances. On this head, I appeal to the general experience of mankind, and *fear* the truth will be found on the other side.

Were their widows and orphans always decently provided for, I am ready to confess, that the expediency of the present proposal, would be, in some degree, superseded; but the contrary is notorious, and were it not for the delicacy of bringing
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forward *living instances*, as proofs of my assertion, I should not hesitate to adduce those that would excite regret, that an institution of this kind, had not been established some years since; and further, I could point out some examples, where, if the head of the family were now to drop, the most lamentable reverse of fortune would immediately succeed, and poverty, in all its horrors, be the certain, and probably constant attendant.

Indeed, so far is this gentleman's assertion from being the fact, that were every instance brought forward of the manifest loss occasioned to their families, by the deaths of medical practitioners, I should fear that the number would be so great, as to deter all those, *whose charity is equally cautious and deliberate*, from contributing their mites to the relief of the widow and the orphan. "What are these," (they might urge) "among so many." To cut this matter short; if there are numerous objects of compassion in this line, it must

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strengthen

strengthen the necessity of the measure ; if there are few, their wants will be more effectually relieved,

But reason must convince us, that the widows and orphans of medical men are frequently left in indigent circumstances : Because it is a profession, the profits of which do not arise from the sale of articles which can be equally well dispensed by strangers or hired assistants ; but they depend entirely on the health, activity, abilities, and moral qualities of one man, and most of all on the opinion his neighbours entertain of him.

In this abstracted view, it is impossible not to perceive and acknowledge the importance of the medical character, with respect to his domestic concerns. Indeed, in this view, it is so very great, that I am not acquainted with any body of men, whose lives are of more consequence to their families, unless it be the clergy ; and they, with a most laudable wisdom,

wisdom, becoming the dignity of that respectable body, have, in this diocese at least, made due provision for every contingency of this kind.

May the influence of their example extend, in this respect also to us, and indeed to every order of men !

Another objection used by the gentleman above alluded to (and I blush that such an one should occur to a professional man in such a cause) was, that his widow would not be under the necessity of applying for relief to any fund. The answers to this are numerous and obvious. Though this gentleman had reason to be thankful for the industry of his forefathers, or perhaps a wealthy matrimonial contract, others might not be so fortunate as to have equal cause ; and, if all *bad*, is no provision to be made against those accidents to which every species of property is liable ? Considering the length of time necessary for the introduction into an extensive business,
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it is very fortunate that a gentleman has something independent to subsist on. Indeed, it is absolutely necessary, that every man who engages in the study of medicine, should be possessed of a separate property; not only to support him till he is sufficiently established, but even to place him above the temptation of meannesses, which would operate to his disgrace, and, in some degree, to dishonour the profession. But this mercenary objection to the measure, forms an indispensable argument for the establishment of it. What, because I am independent, shall I selfishly bury the talent intrusted to my care? No, Rather, let me endeavour to discover how I can best relieve the necessities of my brethren, and increase my own happiness, by the most godlike of all sources, the communication of it to others.

But admitting, (which is not the fact) that in the possession of abundance, there is no obligation to consult the wants of others; yet a negative argument may hence
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be deduced, and have some weight. We must feel the force of an observation of a late eccentric but benevolent author: "While one of our fellow creatures is in want of the necessaries of life, what honest man will indulge in its superfluities?" * The best way of throwing off this restraint, is to impart as freely as we have received.

But I am not without solicitude, lest the measure of affliction, reserved for our families, is not yet filled.

From particular observations on the northern medical seminaries, we cannot fail to remark, that the profession is almost daily receiving fresh practitioners in every department of the science; and, it may also be observed, that in no part of the kingdom is there any deficiency at least in the *numbers* of our corps. From an almost constant residence in London, I can aver, that the students *there* are very alarmingly increasing;

* Rousseau.

increasing ; and, indeed, it would appear that a lamentable propensity prevails with many parents to educate their children in the practice of physic, whereby they increase the professors of a science, already groaning under its numbers.

In this respect too, how indispensable is the establishment of the society I am speaking of ? In providing for the children of the rising generation, we present the best possible antidote against the exuberance of the profession, at present so much on the increase, as to threaten us with evils hitherto unknown. Notwithstanding the author of a late pamphlet, has censured one branch of the profession, (and, indeed, that by which the chief practice is carried on) for charging medicines instead of attendance ; and notwithstanding the proverbial raillery of the vulgar on the great profits of the profession, every man of sense, and every man of business knows, that a regular charge cannot be made on a fluctuating or capricious article ; but it
must

must be attached to those things which can be regarded, by very ordinary comprehensions, as value received. Men of sense and business know too, that the chief source of wealth is not to be sought in great profits, but in great returns; and it is notorious, that *our* returns bear a small proportion to those of almost any trade that is carried on. How seldom do those instances occur, in which the most unremitted attention, the profoundest abilities, or (what is sometimes particularly successful) the most finished elegance of manners, or even all these united, prevail in obtaining what is called *a fortune*!

It is well known, that the most splendid ostensibles of wealth, so generally pursued by the world, are but rarely attained by the faculty; and when attained, are not enjoyed as the fruits of industry, but employed as the means of acquiring consequence and respect; so that a physician, surgeon, or apothecary, in London, sees perfectly well, that a carriage, and every

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appearance of wealth and splendour, must be assumed as a part of his stock in trade. The prevailing ideas in *cities*, are too often imitated and pursued throughout *empires*; and we here find the same prepossession to associate abilities with wealth, and to infer profound knowledge, from the appearance of splendour.

The inference to be drawn is, that the faculty are richer in the externals, than in the actual possession of large property: And that, consequently, their general circumstances as a body, are not capable of being known by the appearance of a few individuals.

It is not perhaps irrelevant to the end in view, to enter slightly into the merits of the faculty, or the gratitude which is their due from society.

The utility of the science of medicine, none will be found so fastidious as to call in question. How far the professors may have

have attained the objects it has in view, is a matter influenced by such a variety of circumstances, as, perhaps, to render it undecisive. Yet, I trust, that the aggregate of knowledge, both medical and general, and particularly a most assiduous attention to the œconomy and operations of nature, were never more conspicuous amongst medical professors in any age or country, than at the present day in Great Britain. Permit me here, to indulge a short time, in a few remarks, in the truth of which I should hope to be confirmed by the general opinion of mankind.

The number of those is, indeed, very inconsiderable, who have not, at one time or other of their lives, been indebted for the most signal services to some branch of this profession. On a little reflection, a large majority, of even the most hardy and fortunate of mankind, will be able to call to mind, situations in which they have experienced the most friendly assistance from the faculty. Situations, from

which, perhaps, there was not a probability of their recovering, but for the kind aid of one who had employed the best years of his life in acquiring a knowledge of diseases, their effects on our complicated machine, and the rational means, under providence, necessary to avert their dreadful consequences. And, if the majority were on the other side, they have reason to bless God for their exemption from the misfortunes attendant on the routine of earthly existence: And their gratitude cannot be better exemplified, than in contributing to the future support of the dearest connexions of a set of men, the entire business of whose lives was, to “heal the sick,” and “go about doing good.” †

But,

† It is painful to remark, that there are some deplorable instances, of professional men falling martyrs to their unwearied assiduity, and eager solicitude for the welfare of their patients, under those diseases, which occupied the attention of our immortal, and much lamented countryman *. I fear those are to be found, who have every cause to mourn the death of their protectors, hurried to the grave by a fatal anxiety for the recovery of their friends from the melancholy effects of contagion.

* Howard.

But, there are not wanting those grateful souls, who are willing to acknowledge, that for the preservation of their lives, they are indebted, under providence, to the unremitted exertions of the faculty. In the subjects of those distressing complaints, which afflict at once the body and the mind, these are frequently found.

A mind, naturally endowed with the most benevolent affections, the most tender sensibility, is too frequently connected with a body equally susceptible of impressions from external causes. Add to this, peculiar modes of living, and many employments, amusements, or prejudices are found to produce situations, in which medical assistance is indispensably necessary.

Such have usually a lively sense of their obligations, and are conscious, it is not in the accustomed fees, that they are discharged. These, it is hoped, will now particularly

particularly step forward, and, by an attention to the future wants of the *relicts* of medical men, evince the sense they entertain of the benefits received from the assistance of their husbands or fathers.

In fact, the lives of more than one half of a whole sex, are repeatedly intrusted to the management of medical practitioners. On their experience, their skill, their attention, the abstraction of their minds from all other pursuits, depend, in numberless instances, the lives of valuable mothers and their offspring. In this situation, not only the life of an individual is intrusted to his discretion, prudence, and knowledge of circumstances, but the maternal support and education, perhaps of a large family, is here at stake. In the most elevated sense of this part of the professional character, he may even be considered as being in possession of the means, under providence, of alleviating the chief *necessary* calamity of female life.

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The importance of the medical character to society, in a moral point of view, must not be overlooked.

It is his office (and beyond doubt every exertion is employed to effect this purpose,) to watch the approach and progress of every disease, whether entailed on us as a condition of our existence, or produced by living in conformity with the urbanity of the times, or even by an indulgence in censurable pursuits. In this respect, his character is most amiable, and, (if successful in his endeavours) the applause of his own mind is not to be surpassed in any situation of life whatever. The "*mens sibi conscia recti*," is his reward in an unparalleled degree; and, in short, here alone he is truly enviable. But, what causes this delightful sensation in his breast? A sensation, which, I trust, all my brethren are susceptible of, and have all more or less experienced. What? but the glorious consciousness of having relieved a fellow creature.

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In the prevention of diseases, lies one chief merit of the profession. * Next to this, is the institution of means to obviate the effects of them, which sometimes amount almost to a prevention; as in that blessed discovery, the inoculation of the small-pox. In the progress of diseases too, how very great are the benefits resulting to relatives from being apprized of the different circumstances of the case? Their anxiety, from suspense, is, in some measure done away; and on this account, a discreet practitioner is always received with confidence and pleasure, by those accustomed to his attendance.

How intimately must this connect him with the peculiar situations and circumstances of his patients? What great opportunities must this afford him, to point out

* “ The prevention of diseases must always consist either in removing the causes which produce them, or, when this cannot be effected, in counteracting their influence.”

DR CLARK.

out the propriety of attending to every relative duty, and of composing a ruffled mind by affectionate advice and consolation, as well as the body by regimen and medicine? *

The faculty of the present age are, in effect, the friends of all mankind. Strangers to the mysterious arts practised by their predecessors, to conceal either their ignorance

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* “ A physician has numberless opportunities of giving that relief to distress, not to be purchased by the wealth of India. But there are many occasions that call for his assistance as a man who feels for the misfortunes of his fellow creatures. In this respect, he has many opportunities of displaying patience, good nature, generosity, compassion, and all the gentler virtues that do honour to human nature.

“ It is as much the business of a physician to alleviate pain, and to smooth the avenues of death, when unavoidable, as to cure diseases.

“ Even in cases, where his skill as a physician can be of no further avail, his presence and assistance, as a friend, may be agreeable and useful, both to the patient and his nearest relations.”

Dr GREGORY.

or their knowledge, they are not conscious of a greater pleasure, than to reduce the principles of an abstruse science, to the level of ordinary comprehensions; and to disseminate truths, from the general knowledge of which, many valuable members of society, have been rescued from a watery grave,* and from all the distressing varieties of suspended animation †.

May your unreserved benevolence, my dearest fellow labourers, be long continued to us in your persons; may the glorious reflection be your comfort in declining age, and “blunt the arrow which brings
“it rest!” And, I trust, your example, will influence posterity to watch over the lives of their indigent brethren, and, through the divine assistance, to render ineffectual, in every instance, the horrid, but delusive resource of a despairing mind!

If

* The Humane Society.

† The Preservative Society, instituted at Northampton, by J. E. Dolben, Esq. in 1789.

If this be a faithful estimate of some of the beneficial effects resulting to society from the exertions of the faculty, it certainly well becomes the public, on the consideration of absolute gratitude, (for their interest is a motive too mercenary to depend on) to assist medical men in making due provision against those evils, which, in many instances, must be the inevitable consequence of their death.

It is observed, by an eminent author, whom I have lately quoted, that “ Gentle-
 “ men of the best families, distinguished
 “ for their spirit and their genius, often
 “ apply to the study of medicine; and the
 “ liberal and ingenuous manners, generally
 “ found in men well born and genteelly
 “ educated, reflect an additional dignity
 “ on the profession.”

To a mind educated in these principles,
 what can equal the anguish of embarrassed
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circumstances? Accustomed to respect as a gentleman, in profession and in manners; always having been in the habit of liberal thinking, easy circumstances, and cheerful hope, he feels the contrast of approaching want with accumulated sorrow; and this is increased, in proportion to the expectation of competency, he had excited and maintained. But, when he is deprived of the hope of retrieving his circumstances, by the consciousness of approaching death, what can equal the anxiety of his mind, for the welfare of those dependants which he leaves unprovided to combat the contingencies of fortune? He may almost be considered, as welcoming the approach of death, to shield him from the tormenting idea.

It is for us, then, my brethren of the profession, by an union of sentiments and pursuits, to prevent the accession of these depressing ideas in any individual of our body. To the happiness of having been born in a country where
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the standard of pure liberty was first erected, and in an age which is making rapid advances in the developement of human perfection and happiness; it becomes us to display a superior degree of liberality; and, discarding every prejudice arising from opposition of interests, or from locality, to shew the world that we are a society of gentlemen, if not by fortune, at least by education, by liberality of sentiment, by united endeavours to procure the *comforts* of life for those, who, during the existence of their protectors, were perhaps no strangers to its *delicacies*.

Prove, then, to the world, that you have united yourselves, as intimately as possible, into a society of learned and affectionate friends. Let it be shewn, that, as a body, you are attentive to the welfare of the individuals which compose that body; and reflect, that if the exertions of one man are capable of effecting much good, how great are the blessings we may reasonably expect to be diffused, by the
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concurrent endeavours of an extensive society?

In a profession so numerous, a great variety of dispositions is naturally to be expected; and, amongst others, there are probably some, who, incapable themselves of increasing its dignity, are ever ready to borrow consequence from their connexion with it. The number of these, compared with the whole, is at the present day very inconsiderable; and, I trust, their influence, is in a similar proportion. But, in order to conciliate, as far as possible, the concurrence of every description of men, it may not be improper to observe, that a body of gentlemen, superior to us in dignity, opulence, and learning, have by no means been inattentive to the circumstances of their widows and progeny.

The accounts of the "Society of the
"Sons of the Clergy," one of the most respectable and best endowed charities in
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these kingdoms, will sufficiently evince the encouragement which a proposal of this kind has received, from, perhaps, the first body of learned men upon earth *.

There are some corresponding circumstances in the sacerdotal and medical characters, which merit an equal attention, from both professions, to prevent the future wants of those, who are accustomed to rely on them for support. It is not altogether

* An instance of the beneficial effects of this institution, will interest the minds of all good men in its favour; and, at the same time, do justice to the gratitude and liberality of an individual.

“ At the last general court of the corporation, for the relief of the widows and orphans of the Suffolk clergy, two letters were read from a clergyman who requested not to be named. In the first, he desired the treasurer to inform him what sums he and his family had, in their distress, received from the charity; the second contained a draft for the full amount of what he had himself received; he likewise expressed his hopes, that, hereafter, he should be able to return the whole sum, by which his family had been benefited, and desired to be considered as an annual subscriber.”

CRAFTSMAN, Sept. 15th, 1792.

gether their income, but the certainty of the *continuance* of that income, which becomes the object of their mutual care. In both instances, their entire subsistence (independent of private fortune, which is foreign to this estimation) falls with their lives. And, in both instances, the almost entire means of accumulating property, are limited to the abstracted exercise of their respective professions; the incomes of which, are usually, not capable of receiving any material additions from the assistance of others. The gentlemen of both professions, are entitled to, and generally receive attention and respect; but, to preserve a continuance of this, it is necessary to display, at least, the appearance of easy circumstances. The desire to preserve this appearance, and to conceal the humiliating reverse, is natural, and too often effected to the real prejudice of their surviving friends. Very far removed from each other in point of revenue, yet, as members of the same society, they solicit an equality of respect with their superiors in

in fortune; and, though convinced of the *real* difference of their situations, yet they seek a recompence in vying with them for the bauble of popular opinion.

From these, and other circumstances, the finances of professional gentlemen, are not often found in an affluent situation on their decease. To remedy this defect, or at least, to mitigate the consequences, is the chief purpose of this address; and, though we cannot hope to equal our clerical brethren in the extensiveness of our establishment, yet, from motives equally pure and benevolent, we will endeavour, like them, to administer comfort to the widow and the orphan, to support them under the heaviest domestic afflictions, and, “smooth their ruffled minds to a serene and tranquil state.”

And, on this occasion, though I am confined to the establishment of a fund in that particular profession, to which I have

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the honour to belong, yet the expediency of a similar measure, is obvious in every society of mankind. And, I sincerely hope, that the benevolence, for which our countrymen are universally remarked, will not, in this instance, forsake us; and that we, as a body of liberal men, shall ever be prepared to acknowledge and return those favours, which a generous public may think proper to bestow on this institution in its infancy.

It will occur to them, that it is the duty of every man to obviate, by every possible means, (consistent with the moral order of things) the sufferings of his own family after his decease. When these purposes are attained, the truly good man will rejoice in the opportunity afforded him of relieving others, without the possibility of this relief, being imputed to any improper motive. And, permit me to add, that a portion of happiness, inconceivably great, is in the power of almost every family to impart

impart without inconvenience. It only requires the reduction of some superfluity, incapable of affording true happiness, but capable of being transmuted into sources of benevolence, to deserving and indigent brethren, and reverting to ourselves with accumulated satisfaction.

To men of dignity and opulence we look up for patronage and the influence of their names; but, on the exertions of our own body, and the friendly assistance of those who are more on a level with ourselves, and with whom we are in the habits of daily intercourse, we principally rely for support in this measure.

To conclude. Should the general expediency of an establishment of this kind, meet the wish of my brethren in these counties, it is proposed, within a few weeks, to call a meeting of the faculty at Newcastle, and, on the election of a president, a plan, which has been successfully adopted in another county, will be respect-

fully laid before them, which may be approved, altered, or changed, as may meet the sense of the company present. It is not prudent for me, a young man, and almost a stranger in this part of England, to presume, in this stage of the business, to publish any received form, or to dictate any regular mode of operation.

Whatever may be the result of this address, I shall rest satisfied, that, in taking the present liberty, I have done what appeared to me a duty, in the best manner my humble abilities would permit; and, be assured, that the most fervent wish of my heart is, at all times, to render every service in my power to my country, and to a profession which well deserves the encouragement and support of every benevolent member of society.

F I N I S.